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THE MONEY MANIAC ✓

Five emigrants, seeking fortunes in America, purchased and worked in common a concession of land in the West. Things went wrong and the tract was leased to an oil concern, rights being reserved to sell the property at public auction on the expiration of the lease. Ten years later a rich gusher was struck.

Joe Hoggart, who had been the leader of the little band, which had long since dispersed, had a mania for money, and he schemed to secure the certificates from the other shareholders, present them on the day of the sale, and claim entire rights.

His faithful henchman was Bill Shopps, a second shareholder. He was sent to locate Rolande and Therese, the daughters of Ramon Garros, who had died in the West. On account of Therese's health, they had gone to their old home in Spain, near the French border. Rolande distrusted Shopps and refused to sell the stock, remembering her mother's words that some day it would be valuable.

Believing that Rolande's sweetheart, Milo d'Espail, an obstacle to securing her consent, Shopps tricked him away. The trick involved Milo in a smuggling deal and he had to flee for his life. Rolande was to meet him in the ravine. On her way she was mistaken for Milo, in her disguise of men's clothes, and shot.

Didier Bouchard, a fourth shareholder, sought Therese and Rolande that he might put the daughters of his old friend in the care of his sister. When he reached the Garros home he found Shopps there searching for the certificate. Knowing Shopps' reputation, Didier was suspicious of foul play.

Therese, her mind a blank, had wandered into the hills and was found by Didier, who took her to London and gave her skilled medical attention. Milo's efforts to find Rolande ceased when he read in the paper of her death in a hospital from a wound. He took the sad news to Didier and Therese, who were about to go to New York to locate Toto Michot, the fifth shareholder, and attend the sale.

They found Toto, a clown and acrobat, in poor circumstances. By that time Therese's health had greatly improved and Didier, who had fallen in love with his pretty ward, gave her a birthday party. The chief entertainer was Quo San, a magician. He made a girl disappear from a box and said he could do the same with Therese. His plot to kidnap her was foiled by the agile Toto, who unmasked the "magician" as Shopps, and had him arrested.

The day of the sale arrived, but Hoggart had not yet given up hope. He locked Didier, Therese, Milo and Toto in a room and announced, from a hole in a wall, that had been covered by a picture, that he would hold them there until after the sale. They were in a panic of fear when a fire broke out and smoke poured through the cracks. Were they to die like trapped rats? Hoggart again appeared at the opening, but this time was overcome by Toto, whose acrobatic skill had again come to their rescue.

They reached the auction at the eleventh hour and represented the shareholders of the San Pedro tract, which sold for twenty-five million dollars. Later Milo found his Rolande in the chateau in France, where she had been imprisoned by Shopps before he circulated the report that she was dead. And Therese's answer to Didier's question was a satisfactory Yes.

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